

*The
Community
Voice*



**UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE
GREAT LAKES**

Oct-Dec 2019

Inside this Edition

- ❑ The Diabetes Charity Walk
- ❑ South Sudan 's Road to Peace
- ❑ IYC Giving hope to the Less privileged children.
- ❑ A survivors tale of the LRA war.
- ❑ ARLPI's Reconciliation Story...continued from previous edition.

Diabetes Charity Walk:

'A world where diabetes can do no harm'.



4th DM walk Nov 9, 2019
SUTEDO-AWACH

In a momentous occasion of the Diabetes Awareness Charity Walk, in support of the people living with diabetes, the URI-GL Chairperson, Bishop Ochola II. M. B. flagged off a Diabetes Charity walk in Atwac-Gulu district, joined by the people of diabetes UK, the leading Charity, for people living with diabetes in the UK and elsewhere in the world, for their vision, 'A world where diabetes can do no harm'. Excerpts from the Bishop's speech reminded people of a healthy diet to help in to prevent, control or even revert the condition.

- "... Diabetes However, it must be noted that eating too much sugar does not cause diabetes. It is only when the body system stops producing insulin that it causes diabetes. Eating a lot of green vegetables, beans, lentils, groundnuts, sesame paste, chicken, fish, pork, boiled food, and fruits, such as avocado, is very healthy for your body. It gives the necessary energy your body always requires, in order, to produce the insulin that balances the body system. However, there are some food, such as sweet potatoes, , rice, sweet banana, posho, and yams, just to mention but a few, must not be eaten in large quantities".
- **By Bishop Ochola II. M. B. (B.TH. U of S CANADA), URI Trustee for Africa and also a Retired Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Kitgum, The Province of the Church of Uganda. On Saturday, November 9, 2019.**

Diabetes Charity Walk in pictures



South Sudan on the road to Peace

The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) CC has during the month of November engage in part of the peacemaking processes of South Sudan. While in the capital Juba, the team of religious leaders from ARLPI (as seen in the picture) met with the first Vice President of South Sudan Lt. Gen. Taban Deng Gai, and he made the following promises:

1. South Sudan will not be plunged into war again even if a national unity government is not formed by 12/11/2019
2. They will not go on to form a government of national unity without the main opposition leader Dr Riek Machar
3. They will commit to the unification, training and equipping a national armed forces and infrastructural development if the transitional period is extended for the next 6 months

On the same day, the President Salvar, Dr. Riek Machar and Sudan Prime Minister were also in Kampala to meet President Museveni to chart a way forward for peace in South Sudan ahead of the deadline of 12/11/2019 for formation of a national unity government. We anticipate a future of peace for South Sudan. **Update shared by Francis Lokwiya-ARLPI.**



IYC Giving Hope to Children



- The Interfaith Youth For Change (IYC) CC in Burundi has recently introduced a weekly program that is intended to inspire and empower young people from various background through learning programs. These children rarely get such opportunities to be equipped with life skills and with the support of IYC they offer programs like English learning and sports for peace program.
- The English program entails grammar, vocabulary items, and most importantly, debates on various social issues with the purpose of promoting youth empowerment.
- IYC has also launched a new activity at Ecofo camara school whereby they support orphans who have been abandoned, traumatized, lived a sad life, and are in need of a mentor to guide them to overcome the life challenges and offer them hope. **Update from Abel Mpawenimana**

A story of a Survivor of the LRA War



Sylvia Acan (right) getting inspiration from Ambassador Mussie Hailu (URI Global Envoy and Africa Director) during the learning visit by URI Executive Director and the Visionary documentarist this year.

Back in 1998 at the age of 9 years, i was abducted by rebels as i was going to school in Pader district. I was forced to move with them on a journey until i couldn't walk anymore that they had to carry me. Along the way, some felt that i was becoming a liability since i couldn't walk but others suggested that i could be useful to them in some way. I later found my self in Sudan where i was assigned to become a baby sitter. At the age of 13, i was given an elderly man to become my husband. I tired to resist it but in vain and eventually i got a baby and another one at the age of 15.

- Luckily enough after some time there was a rescue operation by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). It was too risky, but i managed to escape in the scuffle and got rescued by the forces. While in the group with others were taken to Congo in Bunia town where we got into the hands of the UN which brought us back to Gulu town in Uganda.
- Back home, land conflicts ensued as it became difficult for the returnees to trace their land demarcations. It was during these endless community battles that claimed both my father and mother. Until today we still face attacks from land grabbers .

However, the war had a huge scar on my life. It was a very tough time living with the rebels. I was forced to leave my studies not by my will and given away to an elderly man and have to bear children against my will. Now i feel a lot of pain whenever i meet my colleagues with whom we used to study together.. Until today, I still live with stigma as someone from the bush. We face resentment every now and then

As a way of survival, i do people's laundry in my community and find hope in the family of war survivors created by Golden Women Vision in Uganda by Sylvia Acan and colleagues. **Story from Golden Women Vision in Northern Uganda.**

Continuation of ARLPI's Mato Oput (Reconciliation) Ceremony



- Besides, Atono, has also made very many, both boys and girls, to become impotent or barren, from both clans of Lapyem and Cobo. Atono, has also cursed all the young girls from both clans, never, ever, to become pregnant or elope with their lovers before marriage. Whoever does that must also die, like, her! For that was the very reason, why her dear mother angrily killed her, together with her baby, in her womb! Members of both clans have already confessed that very many young girls, from both clans, who had become pregnant or eloped with their lovers, before, marriages, have all died, over the years, due to curse, by Atono and her dead baby.
- However, with the intervention of the URI's Cooperation Circle of the ARLPI, in Northern Uganda, the communities of both clans have come to their senses, by wholeheartedly, accepting full responsibility, for all the crimes committed, against humanity with impunity, by their great grandmother ancestor, called Lapanga, about 300 years ago. Lapanga, maliciously, killed her own dear daughter, called, Atono, together, with the child, in her womb! Members of the two communities, have made public acknowledgement, on behalf of their great grandmother, of ownership of responsibility, for the crimes committed against humanity, with impunity. These are the great, great, grandsons and granddaughters of Lapanga, who have come to the realization that the tragic death of Atono and her baby must be fully compensated, by themselves, as the great grandsons and granddaughters of Lapanga. This significant ceremony of Mato Oput (Reconciliation) took place, under the guidance of the ARLPI.

Continuation of ARLPI's Mato Oput (Reconciliation) Ceremony



However, URI's Cooperation Circle of the ARLPI does not believe, in the magic power, of a witch-doctor, who claims that, he or she has the magic power, to call the spirits of the dead, to speak, to the living. However, ARLPI, as an Inter-faith Cooperation, is very much interested, in promoting social cohesion, among the different communities, through dialogue, facilitation, and, inter-cultural communication! ARLPI, therefore, works for active peace advocates, peace building, and conflict transformation, all over the world! ARLPI, works with the different communities, whose leaders are willing, to work for peace, trans-culturally, in order, to make inter-religious dialogue, a common feature of any religious involvement, in peace, anywhere in the world! Hence, the reason for our total involvement with the communities of both clans, involved in public acknowledgement of ownership of responsibility, for all the crimes committed against humanity, by their great grandmother ancestor, Lapanga. Both communities were also involved in the practical aspect of Mato Oput (Reconciliation), namely, acceptance of public confession and repentance, the willingness and readiness, to pay compensation, on behalf of their great grandmother ancestor, but above all, to voluntarily reconcile with one another, in order, to restore the broken human relationships, to a complete transformation between the two communities involved, to create the process of healing, and to bring new life to all. This is graphically captured in the Lwo saying, 'whoever, drinks your water, eats your food, enters into your house or gets hold of you, because, he or she, is in real danger, becomes part and parcel of your life instantly! Both the people of Lapyem and Cobo clans have radically taken the paths of reconciliation, in order, to bring a complete transformation and new life to themselves as well as to very, many, many, generations to come! **The END of these series. Story shared by Gladys Aciro-ARLPI**